



AND North-Carolina State Gazette.

Our are the plans of fair delightful peace,
Unwarped by party rage, to live like Brothers.

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FROM THE ENQUIRER.

CURSORY REFLECTIONS.

At the close of the important trial which has so long agitated our city, our readers may very naturally call upon us to deliver our own opinions. To discharge this duty we once more take up the pen.

The subject is complicated & extensive. We shall attempt to seize its leading features & present them in the form of cursory reflections.

These reflections will naturally touch on three great portraits: that of Aaron Burr, The Chief Justice of the U. States, And General Wilkinson.

There is nothing which we have to submit to our readers, which may not very properly fall under one of these heads.

No. I.

PORTRAIT OF AARON BURR.

"Who noble ends by noble means attain,
That man is great indeed."

Is such the greatness of the man who stands before us? Is such the character of the transactions which have been lately unfolded to the world? Let us analyse both his ends & means to see what pretensions they can give him to the character which the poet has described.

This trait uniformly marks his conduct and designs; that he never is contented with a lower seat, so long as he can aspire to the highest. The mines and riches of Mexico are tempting objects; but even the wealth and splendor of the Mexican empire, when viewed through the long tract of water and wood which he would have to pass, and the dangers which were to be encountered, are lost and eclipsed in the superior lustre of a throne, erected at New-Orleans, and stretching its sceptre over the Western States. From every thing which we can collect, as well from his own declarations where he dared to unbosom himself, as the more unguarded avowals of his less artful accomplices, A. Burr must have had three objects in view:

- To separate the Western from the Eastern States,
- To invade Mexico, or
- To effect a temporary settlement on the Ouachita.

The first was the foremost in his hopes and first in the period of its attempted accomplishment. The second was but to turn into a new course the very same means which he had collected, and the very passions which he should have excited for the attainment of the first. And the last was to have been at once the asylum of his despairing ambition, & the germ of new schemes, where it "hush'd in grim repose, expects its evening's prey."

Take the principal points of the evidence as they have been disclosed during this examination, & see how they bear out in these conclusions.

The examination of Gen. Eaton before the court, and in the presence of the very man whom he arraigned at the bar, establishes the truth of his deposition beyond the shadow of a doubt. "Let us wait to see Eaton confronted with A. Burr," was the former cry of Burr's friends. "Let us see what Eaton will dare to say before him, or whether Burr will dare to contradict him." Yet this important confrontation is over, and what is the issue of it? We have seen Gen. Eaton standing in the very front of A. Burr, & under the flashes of that terrible eye, which, like Medusa's head, was to have turned him into a stone: but we have seen Eaton rising with the spirit of conscious truth, & re-echoing the same charges against A. Burr without hesitation, and without the slightest alarm. We have seen A. Burr writhing under the consciousness of his guilt, and his bleached countenance betraying the agitations of his soul. We have seen Eaton persecuted by the cross questions of legal ingenuity, but we have seen him turning upon his assailants, and bearing them down, with the consistency and truth of his story. After this who can doubt that Burr was just as discontented with his situation, and as sanguine and aspiring as Eaton had represented him; that so long as he was doubtful of Eaton's dispositions for his

purpose, he amused him with the tale of the Mexican project; but after having thus felt the pulse of his virtue, after having thus attempted to ascertain how far his temper was lawless enough to acquiesce in this lawless scheme of plunder, and believing at last that he was unprincipled enough for his purpose, that he then began to open to him his favourite and grander scheme of aggrandizement. He spoke to him of dismembering the Union, of the ease with which he could separate the Western from the Eastern States, & the splendors of a throne at Orleans. He did not reveal these ideas as if they had just been hatched, or as if they would be lightly relinquished. Far from it. He dwelt upon his means. He named individuals whom he had selected for his purposes, & he was prepared to answer every objection which could be made to their accomplishment. After this, who is there sceptic enough to doubt that this man was at heart a traitor?

His interviews with Mr. Stoddert point to the same conclusion, though with this material difference, that while he manifested the same discontented spirit, and the same contempt for the weakness of the administration which he was afterwards forced to respect, and the same idle confidence in his own means and talents, he did not dare to assail Mr. Stoddert's ear with the details of his plans. He did not designate New-Orleans as the point where he should make his attack; he did not name the persons whom he had chosen for his accomplices, and he seemed to disclose his ideas not as if they were such as he meant to execute, but as those that might be successfully attempted by some daring genius. The reason of this distinction is obvious. He knew that Mr. Stoddert was a man of too much virtue, and of too little means to become an accomplice. Gen. Eaton, on the contrary, was young, he was bold, he had shown a military turn, & his virtues had not yet been proved by Burr.

At Pittsburg, while he was on his route to the Western country, and under the hospitable roof of the venerable George Morgan, he displays the same bent of mind. In truth, wherever he goes, he is destined like the snail to leave his slime behind him. It would seem impossible for the mind of man, when seriously bent on any favourite idea, to prevent its bursting forth in continued and indirect indications. Burr's mind was full of war, of arms, of military achievements, and the disunion of the States. And what were his conversations and conduct? They were precisely such as might have been expected from this disposition. He could not see a strong man, without considering him as a soldier, & wishing that he had a thousand such fellows. His conversation with the young Mr. Morgans before he reached their father's house, his conversations at and after dinner, breathe this predominant spirit. The same plans haunt him at midnight, and he descends at eleven at night with the candle in hand to the chamber of old Mr. Morgan; for what? Mr. Morgan's ardent virtue stopped his communications, and prevents us from having the full benefit of the disclosure, but there is every reason to believe that his intention was to make the father an instrument in the ruin of his son, and exact from him his consent that this noble minded son should go along with him in his "nefarious" projects to the West.—But why should we dwell upon such scenes as these? The whole air of his conversations at Morganza, and next morning at Washington, was such as was calculated to draw down upon him the worst suspicions of all the Morgans, and to induce them to give the first information to government of his suspicious designs. The complainant Mr. Julien Dupestre, may indeed deny all these things. But what weight should be given to that man's word or vigilance of observation, who has to oppose the united testimony of the Morgans, or who upon being asked whether New York might not be taken with 500 men, could complaisantly bow assent?

Let us proceed another step in the investigation of this evidence. The next point where we are able to fix

this wandering spirit is on Blannerhassett's island. Here it plays the same part; at least if we may calculate the cause by its consequences. Three days after Burr leaves the island, Blannerhassett publishes the Querist. Two circumstances are here calculated to blend Mr. Burr with the guilt or folly of these writings. 1st. That Blannerhassett, the author, was the notorious accomplice of Burr; and, 2dly, That the sentiments and very chain of arguments were so similar to those which a witness had a short time before heard from the lips of Col Burr; that upon being asked who he supposed to be the author, he very sagely replied that Burr had furnished the ideas, & that Blannerhassett had put them into style.

These writings speak for themselves. No man that reads the Querist can mistake the disposition or design with which they were composed. Writings which display to the people beyond the Allegany, the imaginary disadvantages of a union with the Atlantic States, which attempt to show them in how much better condition they would be placed under a government of their own, which persuade them that it is not only a natural right, but a right ingrafted upon the constitution to provide for their own disinct welfare; whoever can mistake the temper of such writings as these from such men, and at such a time, might as well pretend to doubt whether the Declaration of Independence or Common Sense were calculated to promote the revolution of America. No man can doubt them, and no one can pretend to doubt but he who is an accomplice of Burr.

And here it is not improper to give all the weight which they deserve to Blannerhassett's sincere & repeated declarations. From the complex and uncertain code of the law, these declarations may not be received in a court of justice to bear against Burr, but common sense is unable to recognize such an absurd distinction. There are sufficient reasons to satisfy any man, that Burr and Blannerhassett were joint accomplices in a joint undertaking, & that however Burr may have imposed upon the credulity of Blannerhassett in setting before him the extent of his means, that he fairly represented to him the nature of his plans. Let us then gather these plans from Blannerhassett's declarations, and what are they? Wherever he ventured to be the most frank, his schemes were of "the grandest character."

It was not to settle the Ouachita land; nor was it to carry conquest to Mexico; but it was to seize the treasures and arms of Orleans, and by locking up that mouth of the Mississippi, to produce a dissolution of the Union and to establish an independent empire to the west of the Allegany. And to whom were these declarations made? not to such men as Elijah Jones, not to men whom he knew not how to trust; but to such as the Hendersons, and to them too not in the sportive sallies of his mind; but in the solemnity of retirement, and after he had previously exacted from them a pledge of secrecy.—With all that childish garrulity which has been ascribed to him, the simple Blannerhassett could sometimes make distinctions. He was not as fortunate as Burr in always keeping himself concealed behind the curtain, but like him he sometimes knew where to be silent. Like him, too, he sometimes mistook his man, as he did in the case of the respectable Hendersons.

Combine with these circumstances Swartwout's declaration to Gen. W. that there must be some seizing at New-Orleans; the discontented temper of many of the inhabitants of that city; their disposition for a change of government; and the number of friends whom he had there enlisted: recollect the aspiring genius of the man, his desperate fortunes & vain hopes, that the commander in chief and the army would join in with him, and it is impossible to resist the conviction that he would have seized New-Orleans if he could. What were his exact plans we know not;

* Do not Bollman's confessions to the President imply confirm this idea?

but we may at least guess at some part, by which he might have steered his course. He might have supposed that he had force enough to descend to New-Orleans. He might have passed Fort Massac & the fort at Chickesaw Bluffs, without much opposition. When arrived at New-Orleans, he might have expected the aid of Wilkinson and army, and of many and perhaps most of the inhabitants of that city.

His plan at this point is not to be mistaken. If his force was large, if the army were sincere in his support, if the inhabitants of N. Orleans were prompt and explicit in their attachment, Burr would have unfurled the banners of rebellion; he would have invited adherents from all quarters; he would have lavished the confiscated treasures of this city upon them, and perhaps he would have tried whether by locking up the mouth of the Mississippi, or restricting its navigation, he might not have forced the people of the upper country to have acquiesced in his usurpation. Such would probably have been his plan; or if these things had not turned out so favourable to his wishes, he would then have progressed with his other enterprize; collected arms, provisions and adherents, and attacked Mexico through a sea-port, as Vera Cruz, or up the Red River. For he frequently contended during his trial that his boats were well fitted for going up the stream.

If such were Burr's plans, was not Burr a traitor at heart? "But he did not commit the overt act, he was not guilty of levying war against the U. States." Perhaps it may be so. But even under this view of the subject, he saves his life at the expence of his reputation. He may still continue to breathe upon the earth; but what of that? like Cain, he has a mark that lasts for ever.

We shall hereafter enquire in our strictures on the conduct of the Chief Justice, whether the overt act of levying war was committed at the mouth of Cumberland river. We certainly do not approve of the criterion which the Chief Justice has laid down on the point.

This mass of evidence is sufficient to convince us that the dismemberment of the Union was the first and favourite object of A. Burr, & that he never would have looked to the conquest of Mexico, but in consequence of a fear that he should be disappointed. That object was the next nearest to his heart. The host of witnesses who were introduced have proved his attachment to the enterprize; but "this was one," say his advocates, "which he would never have meditated but from the prospect of an approaching war with Spain; and never would have executed but in consequence of that war's taking place."

In this we agree with his advocates; that if he had been disappointed in seizing Orleans, and war had been declared by the U. States against Spain, that he might then have attempted to turn his preparations into that channel. Perhaps they will agree with us in this; that if he had such an enterprize in view, the tottering state of our affairs with Spain was calculated to advance that object, by enlisting recruits in his service. But in this we join issue with his advocates; that if there had been no war from the U. States, he himself would have attempted to have waged it against Spain on his own account. His friends deny this position, and point to the settlement of the Ouachita as the ultimate object of his preparations. This last epithet indeed truly expresses our own opinion of his plans. Can any impartial man believe that he would have retired to the Ouachita until he had exhausted all his other plans? Were his means adapted for agriculture, or war? Was his party composed of families or young men? Were they possessed of muskets & bayonets, or ploughshares and hoes? Were they provided with seed corn or kiln dried meal? But why carry our questions further? Was the man who conducted them better calculated for a farmer or a commander? Was the ardor of his desperate ambition to be sooner gratified in the bosom of retirement, and amidst the

peaceful harvests of the field, or amidst the din of arms & by mowing off the heads of the Mexicans?

But if these presumptive reasons are not sufficient to remove every doubt, there are three direct facts which must be irresistible. Look at the declarations of Blannerhassett to Peter Taylor. Read the conversations of Comfort Tyler in Blannerhassett's Portico. Look at the testimony of Lemuel Henry, who proves that Robert A. New, Burr's intimate friend, and the only Virginian we are proud to say who was found under Burr's banners, did actually ridicule the idea of an Ouachita settlement; said that it was a good idea to hold out to the world, and that it seemed to go down very well.

The man who can resist this force of evidence, must have indeed inherited the soul of an ancient sceptic.

"And is the settlement of the Ouachita completely out of the question? Did Mr. Burr never intend to visit his land? Why then did he pay so much money to Col. Lynch for it?" To this we reply, that he did not pay much money to Col. Lynch, as appears from his evidence, even admitting that there was a perfectly fair contract between them; and, secondly, that the veil which he purchased for his other enterprizes was well worth the money which he paid for it—and, thirdly, that had those enterprizes succeeded, he might easily have repaid himself from the banks of Orleans or the mines of Mexico. We agree with his advocates in this, that Col. Burr would have retired to the Ouachita as an asylum, but not until all his other schemes had been blasted. How long he would have remained there is beyond our conjecture, but the probability is, that the Ouachita would have been a germ and not the grave of his ambition; and that being thus planted in the wilderness, between Mexico and Orleans, he would have called around him the most desperate and enterprising men from all quarters, and then struck such a blow as would have best suited his means and his wishes. Thanks to the vigilance and energy of the government which has so far defeated his machinations!

Here let us pause. We shall hereafter pursue this subject in relation to this man's means, to the consequences which are likely to arise out of his conduct, and to the lesson which it should teach us.

WILLIAM SHAW

AND THOMAS D. BURCH,

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BOARDING.

THE Subscriber informs those Gentlemen, Members of the General Assembly, of his acquaintance, & others, that he continues to occupy the same house on Hillsborough Street that he did last Session, and shall be glad to accommodate such of the Members of the Legislature, as may please to favor him with their custom.
Raleigh, Oct. 28. MARK COOK.

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